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NEW ENGLAND
HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY.

REPORT

OF

GEORGE A. GORDON,

READ AT THE

ANNUAL MEETING, JANUARY 6, 1892.

At the annual meeting of the New England Historic Genealogical Society, held Jan. 7, 1891, a committee was appointed to investigate the matter of the sale, exchange, and removal of books, pamphlets and newspapers.

The printed Proceedings of the Society at that meeting, which were edited by the Publishing Committee, contain no record of the appointment of that Committee, nor can any mention of its existence be found in the synopsis of the proceedings published in the REGISTER for July, 1891.

This significant silence has never been satisfactorily explained. One thing has been determined. It is not the fault of the editor of publications.

At the annual meeting held Jan. 6, 1892, Capt. Geo. A. Gordon, who had been made a sub committee, and who had in his hands all the material from which an intelligent understanding of the subject could be formed, read the following report. As no provision was made for printing it in the Proceedings of the Society, it has been thought proper that a detailed statement of so thorough and exhaustive an investigation as this should be placed in the hands of members of the Society.

At that meeting an effort was made to effect a thorough reform in the government of the Society, and a "REFORM TICKET" was put in the field. It was presented by Capt. Gordon, and was headed "SHORT TERM FOR THE PRESIDENCY; SAFE INVESTMENT OF THE SOCIETY'S FUNDS; NO DEPLETION OF THE LIBRARY." Owing to the fact that a severe snow storm was raging, the attendance was small, and the effort was unsuccessful, but the margin was so narrow that a loss of six votes in the one case and ten in the other would have prevented the election of both MR. GOODELL and MR. EDES.

The attention of all members of the Society is earnestly called to this report, and to the report of the Librarian, the Rev. Dr. Byington, which conclusively show the need of a thorough investigation of the methods of those who now control the Society.

TO THE OFFICERS AND MEMBERS
OF THE
NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY.

Boston, Jan. 6, 1892.

GENTLEMEN: On the 15th of January, 1891, the undersigned received official notification that he had been appointed, in conjunction with Rev. George M. Bodge, at the annual

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meeting of the Society, January 7, 1891, a committee to investigate the matter of the sale, exchange, and removal of books, pamphlets, and newspapers from the library: having attended to the duty charged, he begs to submit a report.

The Committee met, during the summer, at the call of the Chairman at the building of the Society, 18 Somerset street; and, at the request of the Chairman, a package of MSS. was presented for attention, as embracing all the information in the possession of the Society on the subject under consideration.

This package contained, viz.:

- Eight postal cards addressed to Mr. W. K. Watkins.
 - One postal card addressed to the Society.
 - One letter from Messrs. Loudermilk & Co., Washington, D. C., addressed to Mr. W. K. Watkins.
 - One memorandum note from Mr. G. K. Clarke in behalf of the Boston Athenæum.
 - One acknowledgment from the Essex Institute of the receipt of sundry bound newspapers and public documents *as a donation*.
 - Report of Committee on Sale of Books, relating to request of Mr. S. W. Bush for copies of the Christian Register.
 - Two letters from Department of the Interior at Washington, D. C., to Mr. Watkins.
 - One letter from Department of the Interior at Washington, D. C., to the Society.
 - One ditto to the Society.
 - One (unaddressed) from Mr. Barton, librarian of American Antiquarian Society, Worcester.
 - A memorandum, untitled and unsigned, and commencing with page 2 and extending to page 5, purporting to be a copy of proceedings of some body evidently subsidiary to this Society, with accompanying papers, viz.:
- A.** Signed by Mr. R. C. Winthrop, Jr., Chairman, on a descriptive list of such bound books, pamphlets, not periodical, broadsides, MSS. Engravings of the Society proper to be sold or exchanged, 29 Apr., 1889.
 - B.** Special Committee's report on newspapers and periodicals, 11 Oct. 1880, with two supplements.
 - C.** Lists of Wants from the State Library, the Essex Institute, and an offer from the librarian of the Minnesota Historical



- Society to send this Society directories of the city of St. Paul.
- D. Report of the Committee on Sale and Exchange of books and pamphlets, signed by Hamilton A. Hill, Sec. pro tem., 21 Nov., 1887.
 - E. Book Catalogues, Bound Vols. Newspapers; Unbound Files do.; List of Single do.; Fiction and Literature pamphlets; List of Text Books.
 - G. Report to the Council, 29 Sept. 1890, signed G. H. Norcross, Chairman.

These papers have had the careful examination and inspection of your Committee, and have been returned, at his request, to the Rev. Dr. Byington, Librarian.

Your Committee notice the total absence of invoices of shipments of books, pamphlets, or other treasures of the Society, and of corresponding acknowledgments from parties receiving, save in a single instance, in which the Librarian of the Essex Institute acknowledges the receipt of a very large consignment *as a donation*.

Your Committee notice the absence of evidence of values received for any removals from the library.

Your Committee are unable to report what volumes, pamphlets, or other treasures have been removed from the library, whither they have gone other than to the Essex Institute, what disposition has been made of them, or what has been received for them.

Your Committee find in the papers submitted, grounds for belief that large removals have been made from the library, and, as at present advised, your Committee report no advantage to the Society, thereby, except shelf room and the hiatus resulting from the loss.

GEO. A. GORDON.

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